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ABSTRACT

As described in this final report, the Immersion Learning Project at Wayne State University investigated the advantages of two alternative approaches to providing long term inservice training in special education to those in urban preschool programs working with high-risk and/or handicapped young children. During the first year of program operation, training sessions held at a central location of the university were conducted by a variety of outside consultants hired to deal with preschool- and elementary-level teachers but not directly with any day care providers. In its second year of operation, the process was altered in two ways. First, one full-time consultant was actually assigned to each participating day-care center. Second, consultants were given a greater degree of flexibility in fashioning inservice activities to suit specific needs of each site, rather than the composite needs of all the programs. A variety of instruments, measures, and observations were utilized during the project's 2 years of operation to ascertain the effectiveness of the two approaches in increasing the knowledge and expertise of teachers and paraprofessionals. A detailed description of these measures, as well as a summary of activities conducted and effects noted in participant preschool programs during each of the 2 years of operation are included. The report provides recommendations for future implementation of the two inservice delivery systems and a final accounting of project expenses. (MP)

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IMMERSION LEARNING PROJECT: FINAL REPORT

Inservice Training Models for Preschool Programs for Handicapped and At-Risk Children

PS013069

AUGUST 1982

Prepared for Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services

IMMERSION LEARNING PROJECT

Comparative Models for Inservice Training of Teachers of Pre-primary Handicapped in Urban Preschool Programs

FINAL REPORT

Thomas M. Buescher, Ph. D.,
Principal Investigator
August, 1982

This final report has been made pursuant to Grant No. G008001014 granting funds to the Department of Special Education, Teacher Education Division, College of Education, Wayne State University from June 1, 1980 to May 31, 1982.

Any opinions or conclusions expressed in this report reflect the views of the author and project staff and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Department of Education; therefore, no official endorsement should be inferred.

IMMERSION LEARNING PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

Thomas M. Buescher, Ph. D.
Principal Investigator

Purpose

The Immersion Learning Project was funded by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, as an REGI project for 1980-1982. The amount of fiscal support received was $35,000 per year for the two year project. The purpose of the project was to train urban day care providers (through two different inservice models) to work more effectively with young children two to five years of age who were either mildly-handicapped or at-risk for handicaps in behavior, development and learning upon grade-school entrance. The day care centers and participants to be involved in the two year project were all privately operated programs who had never received any formalized inservice training for staff members prior to joining the Immersion Learning Project in the fall of 1980.

The Immersion Learning Project was housed in the Special Education Unit of the College of Educatin at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. The Principal Investigator Dr. Thomas M. Buescher, and the Project Director, Delma J. Banuelos, were both faculty members of the Special Education unit and responsible for various program areas focusing on high-incidence handicaps in younger children.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the Immersion Learning Project's activities and effects with its participant preschool programs during each of its two years of operation. Recommendations for future implementation of the two inservice delivery systems for the training model will be discussed, and a final accounting of project expenses will be reported.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Research conducted by Wayne State's Center for Urban Studies and Wayne County's Child Care Coordinating Council (Smock, 1977) indicates 6,020 children enrolled in 124 full-day centers in Detroit Metropolitan area; 1,120 children in 39 part-day centers.

A startling find is that less than half of the centers provide professional services. A limited number of handicapped preprimary children are serviced by these centers. At the inception of the research program 43 percent stated they would be willing to accept this handicapped population if they had special provisions and/or training.

Perhaps most significantly, the passage of P. L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) which announced the federal requirement of educational services for handicapped children from age three (from birth in Michigan) and the Headstart provision that at least ten percent of the service populations be "handicapped" children have added a dramatic bulge to the preprimary service load. Of the metropolitan Detroit part-time and full-time day care centers surveyed as to the enrollment of children with special problems, the full-time centers were most amenable to servicing this population. Data from a variety of studies and sources leave no doubt that the number of preschoolers needing child care services will continue to increase significantly. A specific area in which child care providers need support and training is their potential to provide for special child. Table 1 illustrates the results of the 1977 Wayne State study.

Table 1: Centers in Detroit Serving or Willing to Service Children with Special Problems, 1977*

Type of Problem	Type of Center			
	Full-time		Part-time	
	Serving	Willing to serve	Serving	Willing to serve
Physically Handicapped	17	26	4	3
Emotionally Impaired	17	10	1	0
Mentally Retarded	12	2	4	1
Learning Disabled	23	13	4	1
Unspecified	-	28	-	16

*The children: Shapes of Children in Detroit, Smock 1977, p.15

Since 1977, two priorities of the Office of Special Education have focused on the improved preparation of personnel working with preprimary special education children:

1. Early Childhood Education: preparation of educational personnel to serve handicapped children, ages 0-6.

2. Paraprofessionals: preparation of personnel to assist a professional in the education of handicapped children.
(Federal Register, 42:57, April 19,1977)

The number of children receiving day care and/or preprimary educational services has grown since 1970. Research by Bronfenbrenner (1974, 1978) has described a number of factors contributing to this rapid increase. Project Headstart and accompanying federal mandates to insure educational services for young children with or without identifiable handicaps have swelled the number of children in formal programs outside their home. Economic conditions forcing mothers to return to the labor force to supplant eroding family incomes, as well as the requirement of some mothers receiving ADC payments to secure job skill training have provided yet another surge in the demand for day care and preschool services for children, ages 0-5.

URBAN CHILDREN

Young children (birth-five years) in urban areas encompass the greatest percentages of children identified as being handicapped or "at high-risk" for eventual handicapping conditions. Employing criteria of the National Advisory Committee on Child Development (1977) 45,390 children are "at-risk" in Detroit. Data provided by a Report to Congress by the Comptroller General of the United States (1979) has convincingly underscored the fact that 3.7 million children below the age of six are at high-risk for normal growth and development. Over ninety percent of these children lived in low-income and usually urban environments.

Among the serious problems affecting very young children in urban environments and possibly precipitating an increase incident of handicapping conditions are:

(1) A growing number of pregnancies in young adolescent girls that proceed to full term;
(2) Increasing numbers of single-parent families, particularly among low-income and minority populations;
(3) High infant mortality rates due to inadequate neonatal care in the home environment;
(4) A continued rise in the number of women who do not seek or receive adequate prenatal care or education;

(5) A growing number of cases of child mental retardation that are preventable, particularly due to contraction of serious diseases or the ingestion of toxic substances;
(6) Large number of young children suffering from poor nutrition and home care;
(7) Large numbers of young children who totally lack available immunization from preventable disease;
(8) A growing incidence of children who are violently abused or neglected at home;
(9) An increasing number of children who have been identified as being handicapped in their early years but who either have no access to early intervention programs or services; or do not sustain enrollment in such services.

The child care centers who participate in this project all serve populations of young children that represent these growing high-risk groups. Most of the centers are in the core urban area of Detroit and serve culturally and linguistically different children from extensive low-income neighborhoods.

Most Urban-based centers have seldom been afforded the opportunity to learn more about the young children they serve beyond the common pattern of "in-service" training. The majority of the target centers noted that the total in-service of any kind barely exceed eight hours per calendar year. The care and nurturance of very young handicapped children clearly requires a more sustained training effort.

RATIONALE

Pre-primary handicapped children are currently being identified and IEPPC's at a rapid rate in most areas of the country. While assessment and appropriate identification present one major problem demanding intensive investigation, a more pressing problem is the lack of knowledge and skills possessed by early childhood teachers and paraprofessionals to successfully intervene with very young handicapped children. An equally serious problem is the lack of such specialized skills in special educators who have been recruited since the early 1970's who now must work with moderately and severely handicapped infants and young children.

Preservice personnel preparation programs in special education have not yet been able to provide sufficient numbers of specifically trained teachers to direc, manage and evaluate programs for young handicapped children. Likewise, the in-service programs provided by local or intermediate districts cannot afford the time required to focus on critical assessment and intervention needs felt by teachers and paraprofessionals responsible for handicapped children in local child care centers. The result is a knowledge and practice vacuum at that has required an innovative solution.

One or two half-days of in-service workshops cannot provide the depth of information and experience needed to improve the quality of programming for pre-primary handicapped children in urban child care settings.

The Immersion Learning Project is a replication and adaptation of an in-service model "The Immersion Training Program," developed by this Principal Investigator. This program, supported by ESEA funds through the Detroit Public Schools and field-tested in the school system during the 1977-78 academic year, provided in-service training for twenty-five elementary school teachers of young gifted urban children.

The ability of the model to provide intensive and effective in-service training for educators of urban children demonstrates its potential to meet the critical needs of paraprofessionals working with preprimary handicapped children. The Immersion Training Program provides viable guidelines for the proposed Immersion Learning Project.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Immersion Learning Project described in this proposal provides comprehensive in-service training for twenty-five teachers and paraprofessionals already working in urban child care centers. With greater specificity, the intensive training will focus on early childhood growth, development, and socio-educational nurturance of culturally and linguistically different handicapped and/or high-risk children. The proposed program will validate its efficacy and applicability as an in-service training model for care givers of pre-primary handicapped and/or high-risk urban children in public schools special education programs, public and private child care centers.

The overall goal of the Immersion Learning Project continues to be to increase the knowledge and expertise of teachers and paraprofessionals in child care programs relative to the handicapped children in the aforementioned programs.

The objectives of this in-service program are multi-faceted and can best be described within the four major training components.

Phase 1.0	Immersion in and analysis of handicapping conditions and management in preprimary children.
Phase 2.0	Designing appropriate curriculum, assessment and intervention models for local site's program, based on previous knowledge and development.
Phase 3.0	Implementing, monitoring and modifying the developed learning and management models in local site.

Phase 4.0 Presenting and maintaining new knowledge and skills to local site staff, and developing networks for staff collaboration in programming for handicapped children.

While ten all-day sessions are utilized in the four training component phases, six major topics ore areas are covered with the participating teachers and paraprofessionals:

(1) What are and are not handicapping conditions, and how might each be correctly identified?

(2) Each young child is a unique learner; how can one recognize the individual learning styles and needs of handicapped children?

(3) What special assessment activities, strategies and instruments can be utilized by program personnel so that young children can be appropriately placed and serviced?

(4) What particular activities, materials and local program resources and schedules need to be modified and adapted for handicapped children?

(5) How can parents of young handicapped children be best supported, guided and utilized in the child care center program?

(6) How can teachers and paraprofessionals best communicate and plan with fellow caregivers and support personnel regarding the needs and priorities of young handicapped children?

In summary, the Project's participants not only acquire new information about very young handicapped children, but utilize the data to formulate appropriate local programs and services as well as train other staff members at their sites to support and enhance the evolving program services.

I. YEAR I: 1980-1981

Project Participants

Eight inner-city preschool programs were finally selected to participate in the Year One activities of the Immersion Learning Project. All eight programs were located inside the inner core of Detroit bounded by Grand Boulevards and the Detroit River. A large number of centers were initially contacted, interviewed by the Project Director, and given information about both the nature of the training being proposed and the responsibilities it would necessitate by the day care center or school. Many centers were unable to commit themselves or their staff to the project due to the amount of training time required over a period of eight months; other centers were not willing to allow the project staff to visit and collect data about the program, or were not willing to let their own staff members participate in the necessary "exchange" activities between programs for two mornings each month. Since the Immersion Learning Project could not afford to both provide extensive training activities as well as pay for "substitute" staff-members on the fifteen (15) training days required, some centers that certainly needed the training were not able to participate.

The eight centers that eventually were selected to participate represented a good cross-section of the kinds of programs available for young children in urban areas. Most of the eight programs had been in operation for more than five years, some as long as ten or twelve years. The levels of program expertise and organization also varied, as did the years of experience and training on the part of the participating staff members. The eight programs and their locations are shown below:

	Center	Location	Participants
(1)	Child Development Center of Detroit	Josslyn near Hamilton, Highland Park	2
(2)	Church of the Messiah Day Care Center	East Grand Blvd. at Lafayette	1
(3)	House of the Carpenter Day Care Center	Myrtle near Third Avenue	1
(4)	Jeffries Nursery School (Wayne State University Laboratory Preschool)	Jeffries Housing Project	2 (plus students from Education each semester)
(5)	Monteith Cooperative Nursery School	Anthony Wayne Drive near Kirby	2

(6)	New Center Montessori School	Second Avenue near West Grand Blvd.	2
(7)	Pumpkin Palace	East Grand Blvd. near St. Aubin	1
(8)	Sunshine Montessori Preschool	Trumbull at Grand River	4

* New Center Montessori participated until January 1981, but discontinued due to staffing and financial problems.

In addition to these eight centers, the project had also planned to include two Head Start programs administered by the Detroit Public Schools and working with bilingual preschoolers. Despite efforts to work out an agreement to include them in the fall, they were unable to participate Year I.

Previous Inservice Participation

Each of the project's participants provided information (by way of survey) about their previous inservice education activities. These results are profiled in the table below, shown in direct comparison to what the Immersion Learning Project proposed to deliver during its Year I activities. In all cases, the participants responses indicate the optimal level of response; most participants' responses were even less or more negative than those included here. In general, the Year One participants in the project had engaged in little formalized inservice training prior to this year, particularly any training focusing on handicapped or high-risk young children like those being served in their programs.

COMPARISONS OF MODELS

	TRADITIONAL	IMMERSION LEARNING
APPROACH	TOPICAL	LONGITUDINAL/DEVELOPMENTAL
NEEDS	Directors/Adminst with some staff input at times	Participants' with input from Project staff and research base
TOPICS	GENERAL SPECIFIC OPERATIONS HOW-TO	SPECIFIC FOCUS INTERCONNECTED/INTERDISCIPLINARY HOW-TO
PRESENTERS	One or two per year	Twelve-15 per year, not including Project staff
TYPES OF SESSIONS	HALF DAY FULL DAY REGIONAL CONFERENCES	FULL DAY
LENGTH OF TRAINING	2 to 6 hrs/day 3 to 4 days/year Total: 20 hrs+	4 to 8 hrs/day 30 days /8 mos. Total: 240 hrs+
CONTACT WITH CHILDREN	INCIDENTAL	REQUIRED (twelve days/8 mos.)
FOLLOW-UP	On request of the program	Two-year continuous, with techinical assistance
EVALUATION	Participants evaluate Inservice sessions	PROJECT evaluates the sites and participants PARTICIPANTS evaluate the project Both evaluate own growth/change
LASTING EFFECTS	Some carry over of general knowledge Two to three ideas or strategies tried once or more (?) Poor recall of approach or content after 8 wks.	Maximum carry-over of general knowledge Implementation (and follow-up) of one or two ideas each time Motivation to adapt/change program On-going technical assistance

Project Activities for Year I

Three major kinds of activities were coordinated by the Immersion Learning Project during its first year of operation: (1) Traning and Exchange activities with project participants, including on-site evaluations; (2) Technical assistance to individual projects and participants; and (3) the development of usable products for other REGI and non-REGI consumers. Each of these activities will be briefly summarized.

Training/Exchange Sessions

Twenty-four (24) different training days were held during Year One with the projects' participants. Of these twenty-four days, nine were devoted to on-site "exchanges" between program staff members or visitations to the two "demonstration projects" working with preschool handicapped children, and the remaining 15 sessions focused on specific topics and concepts about handicapped and at-risk young children.

The calendar below outlines the topics and consultants who worked with the project during its first year to develop and discuss these important issues. More detailed descriptions of each session can be found in the project's initial funding proposal.

Training and Exchange Calendar
1980-1981

Week	Topic/Activity	Consultants
I	Overview of ILP: Roles and Responsibilities	ILP Staff
	"Impact of Urban Environment on Young Children's Growth and Development"	Dr. Barry Bogin Physical Anthropologist
II	Introduction to DemoSite: Keith Bovenschen School, Macomb County ISD	Donald Bates and his Staff
	"Overview of Normal Developmental Milestones: Language, Thinking and Behavior"	ILP Staff
III	Introduction to DemoSite: Infant-Preschool Special Education Project, Plymouth Schools	Dr. Harold Weiner and his staff

IV	Exchanges with Other Programs	-
V	"Using Community Resources and Parents to Enhance Your Programs"	John Nowasad Jeffries Nursery School
	"Working with Parents and Families of High-Risk/Abused Children in the City"	Patricia Morin, Project P.A.C.T.
VI	Exchanges with Ohter Programs	-
VII	"Language and Thinking: Understanding its development, its problems, and remediating difficulties"	Dr. Lynn Bliss, Speech Therapist
VIII	Exchanges with Other Programs	-
IX	"Assessing Hearing and Speech Problems in Linguistically Different Young Children"	Dr. Doris Allen Clinical Audiologist and ILP Staff
X	Exchanges with Other Programs	-
XI	"Understanding and promoting early reading behaviors in young handicapped children: curriculum and activities"	Margot Biersdorf Director, Gibson School for Gifted Children
XII	Exchanges with Other Programs	-
XIII	"Cognitive Deficits and Learning Problems in Young Children: Mental Immaturity and Complications"	ILP Staff
XIV	Exchanges with Other Programs	-
XV	"Early Intervention Curricula and Informal Assessment: What can work in your program for youngsters At-Risk"	Kathi Brandi, Southfield Child Development Ctr.
XVI	Exchanges with Other Programs	-

XVII	"Developing Effective Behavior Management Skills to Use with Behaviorally-Disordered Pre-schoolers"	Carol Anderson, Infant Preschool Special Education Project (IPSEP), Psychologist
XVIII	"Exchanges with Other Programs"	-
XIX	"Developing An Inservice Workshop for Program Colleagues of ILP"	Susan Moore, Consultant, Mich. Department of Education
	"Assisting Parents to Control Young Children's Behavior	Carol Anderson, Infant Preschool Special Education Project (IPSEP), Psychologist
XX	Exchanges with Other Programs	-
XXI	"Identifying Motor-Development Problems in Young Children and How to Correct Them"	Marji Dueweke, Physical Therapist, Bovenschen School
XXII	Exchanges with Other Programs	-
XXIII	"Health, Safety and Nutrition: Improving Program and Parent Responses to Young At-Risk Children's Needs"	ILP Staff
XXIV	ILP: Final Summary and Evaluation Session	ILP Staff

Further discussion about the individual training sessions, weekly assignments and site-exchanges can be found in the evaluation section later in this report.

Technical Assistance

While the focus of the Immersion Learning Project's first year was staff training and evaluating a particular model for inservice training, technical assistance to each program grew out of the amount of contact the project staff had with each day care center. A number of centers sensed that the project's commitment to improving the quality of programming for at-risk children also provided them with an opportunity to seek expert advice for individual program problems.

The nature of the problems for which help was sought included a wide spectrum of issues:

(1) specific observation and recommendations for particularly troublesome youngsters in three different programs;

(2) specific evaluation and recommendations regarding the regular curriculum for two centers;

(3) the overall evaluation of one centers' physical layout and space utilization, as well as a plan for future expansion;

(4) specific recommendations and training in the use of a developmental screening instrument for two centers;

(5) "clearinghouse activities" for all eight centers, usually focusing on directions for finding psychological or medical diagnostic services, specific types of therapy for language and hearing, and useful resources for further developing program and staff enrichment.

The programs that participated in the Year I activities each commented on the "responsiveness" of the ILP to their own programmatic needs as being a positive reason for continuing their relationship with the project during Year II. As one program administrator commented at the end of the year, "This has been the first time in our nine years of operation that talented, people have come to help us improve our program and not just tell us what were doing wrong" The ILP staff's experience in this regard has been that the extensive length of the project's contact with the centers (eight months) helped to build a working relationship that promoted the use of all the project's resources and not just its training activities.

Project Dissemination

Being one of few REGI projects working directly with privately-operated urban day care centers, dissemination of the ILP's purpose, scope and various training models for inservice education has occupied some time during Year I. The dissemination process has included two different aspects: direct involvement in other day care training efforts in Michigan, and participation in the professional development activities of four different state and national conferences.

The Immersion Learning Project's direct involvement with the Michigan Department of Social Services' Day Care Providers Training Project was sought through this project's director, L. Sally Brown, who also serves as the Executive Director of the Council on Early Childhood at Wayne State University. The purpose of the Providers Training Project each year (for five years) within a twenty-hours curriculum. The ILP was directly solicited to develop two ninety minute modules as part of the 20 hour inservice package. The two modules developed concentrated on "Young Children with Special Needs" and "Bilingual/Bicultural Children in Preschool Programs." Both modules are now in use across the state of Michigan.

ILP staff were also involved with presenting information and strategies about handicapped and at-risk children to over one-hundred. Family Day Care (Home Care) Providers who were being trained by the Wayne County (Michigan) Child Care Coordinating Council, known as 4 C's. For this presentation, participants from one of our target centers were also involved in the planning and delivery of the material. The population of home-care providers was an excellent group to discuss handicapping conditions and high-risk problems with; the project has been asked to consider doing a similar presentation during 1981-82.

The more typical dissemination activities of discussing and demonstrating aspects of the Immersion Learning Project to interested colleagues included four different presentations:

(1) National Convention of NAEYC in San Fransisco, November 1980.

(2) Michigan's Annual Convention of its State Chapter, AEYC, February 1981.

(3) Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), Boston, April 1981.

(4) Seminar for Members, Council on Early Childhood, Wayne State University, Detroit, May 1981.

Other activities are planned for 1981-82, including presentations at the NAEYC Conference in Detroit (November), the American Orthopsychiatric Association in San Francisco (March), as well as topical seminars for a variety of training programs in the metropolitan Detroit area.

Evaluation of Year I

The Immersion Learning Project was able to use the expert services of a Special Education department faculty member to coordinate, collect, analyze and report the various evaluation activities included in the Year I program. Dr. Beverly Parke, who has served as project evaluator for a number of state and federal projects as well as those programs operated by our own department at Wayne State, was given 25% of her yearly faculty load to work with the Immersion Learning ing Project. The results reported below are abstracted directly from her report July, 1981. (Full results are kept on file for use in our final report, August 1982).

Evaluation Design

Evaluation activities in the Immersion Learning Project included:

(1) Collection of information from participants about their own knowledge and skills (pre/post);
(2) Collection of information about appropriate perceptions of children by use of behavioral scenarios (pre-only);
(3) Collection of information about each of their programs (philosophy, goals, types of children);
(4) Performance and analysis of "naturalistic observations" of children and adults in each program (pre-post);
(5) Partcipants' evaluations of the training sessions every other week;
(6) Participants' evaluations of the first year's activities (exit interviews).

In addition to these rather structured measures, project participants were also asked to carry-out a "self-documentation" activity that included keeping a journal or log of ideas and reactions to presentations throughout the year, as well as a continual collection of their own casual reading or participation in other staff training activities at their centers.

Results

Results in the various evaluation areas will be discussed separately, with implications and recommendations included in the next major section of this report.

KNOWLEDGE All participants were administered two forms of a basic information inventory before and after the training year. The items on these inventories were written in such a way that respondents could agree or disagree, or simply state that they were uncertain. While twenty-five items included on each form, twelve items were targeted as being necessarily related to pre-primary handicapped and high-risk children. Scores for the participants on these 15 items are shown below:

KNOWLEDGE OF HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS
Critical Items

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Individual Mean for Correct Items	7.32	8.28
Group Mean for Correct Items	7.56	8.78
	Percent Correct	
Individual Mean Percent for Total	61 %	69%
Group Mean Percent for Total	63%	74%

Participants generally had the most difficulty with items related to developmental expectations and outcomes, particularly as they differ between handicapped and non-handicapped children. In addition, the trainees held quite firmly to their belief that parents of high-risk children would be more demanding on program time and resources despite evidence and experiences shared by teachers to the contrary.

SKILLS BANK. All participants were asked to complete a "Pre-Training Inventory" in early October, 1980, outlining for themselves those particular skills or resources they felt were adequate or better prior to joining the Immersion Learning Project. The major areas covered by the inventory were: child development concepts, skills related to children with developmental concepts, skiils related children with developmental or behavioral handicaps, curriculum, program designs, assessment, professional growth areas, and personal work skills.

Analysis and comparison of comment collected both prior to and after the ILP year revealed the following conclusions:

(1) The primary skill area participants asked for additional help in both before and after the year was behavior management and problems related to it. (This finding is consistent with a great many other inservice projects conducted since 1975).

(2) Over fifty-percent of the topics mentioned by the participants in the pre-training inventory as "needing more information" were also mentioned in the exit interviews. (This finding is also consistent with other inservice and workshop evaluations; participants typically seek more information about the very topic they have just been exposed to in a session).

(3) The greatest gains by participants were in concepts and skills related to learning and behavior handicaps, the particulars related to curriculum modification, and the various resources available for handicapped children.

(4) All participants were specific in noting in the exit interviews how their participation had affected their own personal confidence and motivation to "stretch" themselves professionally.

NATURALISTIC OBSERVATIONS. Each of the day care programs participating in the Immersion Learning Project during Year I was visited twice for the purpose of completing a "naturalistic observation" of the children's interaction with each other, with the tasks and space provided to them, and with the adults responsible for them each day. These observations were carried out by the project evaluator and assistant director during early November 1980 and early June, 1981. the structure of the observations is such that samples of behavior and interaction are taken for several minutes at fifteen minute intervals during a two-hour time span. All centers were visited and observed in this manner between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

Before commenting on the findings and their limitations, general results from the observations should be noted:

Three-Condition Naturalistic Observation*

Factors	November Data	June Data	Change
I. Children's Time Allocation Pattern			
- Free Play	54%	56%	+2%
- Task Area	27%	30%	+3%
- Structured Teaching time	19%	14%	-5%
II. Children's Interaction Patterns			
- Solitary Play	37%	36%	-1%
- Play with to 5 peers	47%	36%	-11%
- More than 5 peers	12%	21%	+ 9%
- Total group	4%	7%	+ 3%
III. Adult's Interaction Pattern			
- Away from children	15%	18%	+ 3%
- Observing Children	18%	27%	+ 9%
- Participating Approp.	25%	33%	+ 8%
- Participating Inapprop.	3%	0%	- 3%
- Adult directing	39%	22%	- 17%

*Observers recorded and coded activity within each day care/pre-school setting on a pre-determined coding sheet; frequency counts were analyzed and compared to determine this data.

Some comments about these findings could be directed to the following points:

(1) In general, the programs observed varied widely in how much structure adults brought to the environment (leading, directing, planning, etc.) and how much time was given to the children without any strings attached. One comment could be that many programs invest the major portion of their time in watching children play on their own; better programs seemed to use the full-play of children more judiciously.

(2) Adults were generally quite active directing or participating in children's activities.

(3) The majority of children observed spent the greater portion of their time playing alone or with two to five peers.

(4) In general, children's time in these programs was equally divided between free-play and the other two areas: directed activities or assigned "task areas", eg., painting, block play, table activities, etc.

(5) Some CHANGES in this pattern were evident by the end of the training period:

(a) Adults became a bit less directive, choosing to participate more in activities and lead by modelling.

(b) Children's interaction patterns were essentially the same with a slight trend toward being involved more in larger group activities.

(c) Children's time allocation remained the same on the mean across all groups; the differences were reflected in how programs shifted towards the middle in their use of children's time, viz,, "looser" programs became more directive, "tighter" programs loosened up.

(6) The ILP participation seems to have had its greatest influence on adult interaction with children (both number and quality) rather than on the actual structure of the center's program. This change would certainly increase the positive ability of a program to work effectively with handicapped/high-risk youngsters.

SELF-EVALUATION. During Extit Interviews conducted in early June by the program evaluator, participants for Year I were asked to complete a Self-Evaluation Inventory, commenting on such areas as: improved knowledge/skills, personal growth, future goals, benefits from being in the ILP, and ways they might change their participation in the future. Summaries of these responses are shown below.

(1) Good Information: Four general areas were included by the ten participants completing the inventory: child development concepts, specific handicap conditions, program modifications and curriculum adaptations.

(2) Good Skills: Three general areas were included in various forms by the participants: specific methods for improving/evaluating curriculum, improved strategies for working in programs with children and parents, and assessment practices.

(3) Growth Due to ILP Sessions: Specific areas/ issues mentioned by participants as being linked to ILP in 1980-81 included:

- Child Awareness: Awareness of high-risk children and conditions; understanding the relationship of behavior to language and thinking; better working knowledge of child development; more careful observation of children's growth.

- Community Awareness: Good knowledge of what is available in local community resources; opportunities and programs at other centers; first-hand acquaintance with local consultants.

- Personal Perspectives: Improved acceptance of young children with handicaps; improved focusing on personal goals for children; better communication with parents; more "job confidence;" more willing to be self-critical as program evolves; better cooperation with other teachers.

- Program Areas: Understanding of the integral importance of all experiences and activities; meeting children's needs at own level; need for children to develop listening skills; awareness of the difficulty in selecting and implementing group goals; better ways to encourage and support staff.

(4) Ways each would change their participation in ILP: Comments from each Year I participant contained several generalized ways they might approach ILP if they were doing it again:

a. Spend more opportunities at the exchange sites.
b. Utilize the "Journals" better.
c. Complete all of the assignments connected with the training sessions.
d. Try to ge more release time from programs.
e. Get a better understanding of what ILP would require at the outset.

(5) Overall, ILP Participation Was:

Very interesting and benficial to me
Refreshed and updated forgotten information
"Subtly rewarding" — with a far-reaching impact not yet experienced
Easily transferrable knowledge for me
Informative, educational in a staggering way
Enjoyable — particularly by learning with others who were also working

Sometimes a hassle for the program, but worthwhile.

Year I participants commmented on multiple areas of personal growth and development that were probably indirect consequences of the training, but which nevertheless seemed to touch areas of child care and teaching in their own programs. Several teachers specifically noted that their year with the ILP had persuaded them to return to college again in the area of child development.

EXIT INTERVIEWS. Participants in Year I evaluated the first year of ILP in exit interviews conducted by the project evaluator in early June. Areas covered by the interview included: impressions of the training format, most/least profitable aspects, use of demonstration sites, additional skills needed, and recommendations. Comments below reflect the trend of responses gathered.

(1) Impressions About Training Format. Generally, all participants enjoyed the time spent with ILP, benefitting from meeting with other staff from various centers. But problems were also noted, specifically the "uneven-ness" of the centers participating in the project (some felt they were in a "different league") and the lack of fit between personal learning goals and the curriculum required by ILP. Interestingly, though, all participants felt that the project should work with them a second year since their programs were just becoming better suited for handicapped youngsters after Year I.

Comments about the sessions varied: particular consultants were appreciated more than others, those who were "less technical" being praised the most; handicaps were discussed that did not directly reflect their current population; consultants did a good job covering so many topics in an interesting, useful way.

(2) Most profitable aspects of ILP I:

- Long-term contact and ideas from other participants and ILP staff.
- Demonstration site activities with children
- Learning again particular strategies/ideas that had been forgotten
- Learning how to evaluate my own teaching and program growth
- New insights put together for us by the Project in useful ways
- Knowing that the project staff would be available to our program if we needed assistance

(3) Use of Project's Demonstration Sites. It was disappointing to realize how little the project's two demonstration sites were used by the Year I participants beyond the two initial visits. All participants felt that the two sites were too far away (approx. 15 miles) from their programs; in addition, few felt comfortable

enough to schedule visits for themselves without other staff members accompanying them.

Of the ten participants interviewed, only four had used both of the demo sites on their own more than once. The other six had visited the Bovenschen site once after the initial introductory visits. Distance and administrative "attitude" were the main reasons given for the lack of use of IPSEP.

(4) Additional Information/Skills Needed Now: The Year I participants singled out a need for increased expertise in what to actually do with preschool handicapped children once they were integrated. To each of them it was not enough to understand how such children developed or functioned without a more complete plan for assuring their success in the program.

Other topics less frequently mentioned included: emotionally-impaired and developmentally delayed youngsters; parent follow-up; assessment strategies for all children; simple methods of sampling a whole program's behavior; program evaluation; grant-writing; long-term staff inservice planning.

(5) Use of the Exchange-Sites Concept: Throughout the Year, participants were scheduled to visit each of the other participants' sites at least twice, exchanging the time at their own program for time at another. The exchange concept was one first tested out in Year I and participants were asked to evaluate its operation usefulness.

The participants found the concept to be workable and interesting, but difficult to work out each time. Sixty percent found the exchanges important and useful, while 40 percent did not agree. Positive comments focused on the unique opportunity to visit each other's programs "at work" and work with other children. Negative comments singled out the problems in having reduced staffing on certain days and the reality of visiting "inferior" programs.

(6) Recommended Improvements for Year I.

- Put more emphasis on getting acquainted with each other's sites earlier in the year.
- Provide all participants with a year-long reading list covering curriculum topics.
- Involve the participants in evolving group's goals and perspectives for sessions.
- Arrange more varied types of meeting times and group sizes; eg., several centers at a time, total group, individual center conferences, etc.
- Concentrate less on more severe children

- Familiarize all consultants/speakers better with the diverse needs of the group
- Make visitations and exchanges optional, or arrange for all participants to visit all sites on group basis
- Search out demonstration sites closer to inner city and more compatible with participants programs
- Allow Year I participants to continue with ILP for a second year.

In summary, the Year I participants recommended involvement in ILP to their colleagues 100%. They noted that the opportunity expanded their abilities to understand the problems facing programs that work with children at-risk for handicaps, and created a useful network for continuing group resourcefulness. All participants believed the project had good potential and would be most useful to less-experienced teachers and struggling programs. Project staff were seen as being particularly helpful and knowledgeable, always being able to visit a program or meet with participants.

II. YEAR II: 1981-82

Project Participants

Six preschool programs were selected by the ILP staff for participation in Year II activities. A major difference in these programs was the heavier concentration of more "formalized" settings, including two Detroit Public School sites and two Montessori preschool, along with two day care programs. This distribution of program-types was a desired departure from the Year I populations; previous programs had been day care facilities and not "school-based" settings. The centers chose for Year II activities were selected from a pool of fifteen centers from the inner core of Detroit who had voluntereed to be participants. Those centers not selected for inclusion were most often unwilling to commit a free portion of staff time (either as individuals or small groups) over a period of eight months. While this year's model did not demand release-time from the program for training, it did require the program to make staff available to work with the site consultant on a weekly basis. Nine prospective programs could not make that commitment.

The six centers selected as Year II participants again represented a good cross section of the types of programs available for young children in inner Detroit. The sites represented varied years of existence, ranging from four years to fifteen years. In each case, the current director had been on site for at least four years; as a result, the programs were all in the hands of experienced directors, although administrative effectiveness varied from site to site.

The six programs and their locations are shown below:

	Center	Location	Staff Trained
(1)	Cadillac School Title I Preschool	15125 Schoolcraft Detroit, MI 48227	3
(2)	Cadillac School Title I Kindergarten	15125 Schoolcraft Detroit, MI 48238	2
(3)	St. Olaf's Children's World	15701 James Couzen Detroit, MI 48238	5
(4)	Booth Memorial Hospital Montessori School	130 W. Fort Detroit, MI 48202	6
(5)	Sleepy Hollow Educational Ctr.	Greenfield Avenue Detori, MI 48228	7
(6)	New Center Montessori	8007 Second Detroit, MI 48202	8

One of the programs served during Year II had a good distribution of bilingual children in its service population (Booth Memorial). Located in the southwest portion of the inner core of Detroit, this center enrolled Spanish-speaking children from the neighborhood as well as English-speaking children. The staff members, however, were not bilingual and consequently looked to ILP staff to assist them in effectively shaping their program for these children.

Previous Inservice

As in Year I, each of the staff members from the participating centers provided information through survey and interview about their program's previous inservice training activities. There were few differences from the results reported during Year I; the only major deviation was the the more formal school programs (public school and Montessori) had large-group inservices more frequently than the day care centers targeted last year. In terms of content or effectiveness, however, these respondents were equally negative. Most inservice activities related to operation of the program and not to the issues specifically raised by ILP.

Project Activities: Year II

Three major training areas were handled by the Immersion Learning Project during its second year:

(1) Training and Demonstration Site activities developed by site consultants to meet the unique needs of each program;
(2) Specific technical assistance to Year I target sites; and
(3) the development of usable curriculum and evaluation products for other REGI and non-REGI consumers. Each of these activities will be briefly sketched.

Training Activities Coordinated by Consultants

In keeping with the nature of the Year II delivery model (one consultant per target site), the scope and intensity of training activities varied widely from site to site. While there was a core "curriculum" each consultant addressed at the site, the bulk of the sessions were highly individualized, often concentraging on different issues and resources for each staff member or director. The following table identifies the core issues addressed by each consultant as well as the other topics developed for various sites.

Training and Resource Topics 1981-1982	Booth	Sleepy Hollow	New Center	St. Olaf's	Cadillac Pre-School	Cadillac K
Other Topics						
(1) Normal Developmental Milestones and High-Risk Children	X	X	X	X	X	X
(2) Relationship of Language and Thinking to Problem Behavior	X	X	X	X	X	X
(3) Cooperating with Parents of High-Risk Children	X	X	X	X	X	X
(4) Informal Assessment of High-Risk Children	X	X	X	X	X	X
(5) Curriculum Planning and Environment Organization	X	X	X	X	X	X
(6) Identification of Cognitive and Motor Handicaps in Children	X	X	X	X	X	X
(7) Evaluation and Selection of Educational Materials for High-Risk Children	X	X	X	X	X	X
(8) Children's Play and Integration into Learning	X	X	X	X	X	X
(9) Promoting Self-Esteem in children	X		X	X		
(10) Increasing appropriate behavior/decreasing inappropriate	X	X	X	X	X	X
(11) Language Development	X		X			
(12) Utilizing music throughout the curriculum	X			X		
(13) Formal and Informal Assessment					X	X

(14) Helping Children cope with each other's stress				X	X	X
(15) Understanding the development of children's art; promoting it in curriculum	X		X	X		
(16) Promoting movement in children's activities			X	X		
(17) Science for Preschoolers			X	X		
(18) Continuity in Curriculum				X	X	X
(19) Improved communication to parents	X		X	X		X
(20) Reorganizing and evaluating children's space	X	X	X	X	X	X
(21) Using Staff time efficiently		X		X		X
(22) Selecting/Evaluating materials for thinking skills	X	X	X	X	X	X

Technical Assistance

While site consultants maintained primary responsibility for working with the Year II target centers, the ILP staff concentrated their efforts on specific technical assistance to Year I sites (as follow-up) or to Year II programs requiring specific administrative/training efforts to accommodate handicapped youngsters.

The type of problems for which assistance was asked included the following:

(1) direct observation assessment, and curricular recommendations for non-identified high-risk children (ages 3-5 years);

(2) recommendations regarding two centers' Board of Directors operation and management, including guidance for developing program philosophy and goals in keeping with the types of children served;

(3) assistance with budget development and refinement to accommodate fluctuating state reimbursement monies for programs;

(4) guidelines and editing for parent handbooks to include information about mildly handicapped children;

(5) over-all evaluation of a center's proposed inclusion of eighteen to thirty month-olds in their existing programs, with recommendations for both space utilization, curriculum and materials;

(6) "clearinghouse activities" for all previous centers, typically focusing on recommendations for diagnostic personnel, curriculum evaluation, and teaching/learning resources for children and parents.

Products Developed

Two products were refined and completed during the second year of the project. The first was the modified version of a Naturalistic Observation Instrument derived from David Day's work (1979) and utilized exclusively with the urban preschool programs participating in the project. This version is somewhat more compact than Day's instrument and focuses exclusively on the interaction of adults with children in three modes: task areas, instructional groups and free play. Technical data on the instrument will be in a forthcoming paper for the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD); more descriptive information can be found in this report.

The other major product completed during Year II was a Curriculum guide and descriptive monograph about the Immersion Learning Project's approach to inservice training for urban preschool programs desiring to more successfully accommodate mildly handicapped and at-risk children. Published by the project, it was distributed upon request to preschool programs that contacted the directors following national and local presentations about the ILP's approach to training, and also through the National Inservice Network (while copies lasted). Titled Immersion Learning: A Curriculum Guide for Urban Preschool Programs, the monograph explains the inservice model developed by the project and summarizes the issues, topics, concerns and strategies used to train and evaluated preschool teachers, aides and programs to better serve children at-risk for handicaps. The project plans to continue to offer the monograph at cost (for printing/handling) after the initial printing supply is exhausted.

Project Dissemination: Year II

During Year II, project dissemination centered on updating local agencies, groups and national colleagues on the progress of the Immersion Learning Project as it moved from one version of the model to the other. Several national presentations were made as well as two statewide conference engagements:

(1) National Convention of NAEYC in Detroit, November, 1981. Two seminars coordinated by the ILP staff entitled: "How to plan and develop an outdoor play environment" and "Operating from a position of strength on behalf of young children through the inservice of urban day care providers."

(2) Annual Meeting, American Orthopsychiatric Association in San Francisco, March, 1982. A panel presentation on services for high-risk children and their families with a paper: "Immersion Learning: An inservice model for Day Care Centers Serving High-Risk/Handicapped Preschoolers."

(3) Annual Meeting, Council for Exceptional Children in Houston, April, 1982. A panel presentation/paper focusing on Learner Self-Documentation in Inservice Education activities.

(4) Annual Child Development Conference, Michigan Association for Education of Young Children (MiAEYC) in Lansing, March, 1982. Resource presentation on Developmental Assessments for High-Risk/Handicapped Kindergarten-age children.

(5) Annual Meeting, Michigan Council of Cooperative Nursery School, in Lansing, May, 1982. One-day

course focusing on reading and writing development in preschool children with unique problems.

In addition to these formal presentations, Project staff were involved with several community agencies in a cooperative effort to develop a resource guide for parents of young children to make services and expertise in the Detroit metropolitan area more accessible. Coordinated by the United Community Services, this task force met for six months before completing its project and sending its work to the Board for dissemination.

Even as the project ends in June 1982, two other presentations have been planned for 1983 at the Biennial meeting of SRCD (Detroit) and CEC (Detroit) in early spring. Furthermore, two articles in a forthcoming issue of the Urban Educator (Spring 1983) have been written by project staff members.

Evaluation of Year II

During its second year of operation, the ILP again utilized the services of a Wayne State University faculty member in Special Education to evaluate the project's operation and effectiveness. Dr. Beverly Parke, an experienced program evaluator, collected data from participants and sites, coordinated the naturalistic observations, conducted follow-up surveys and interviews with previous participants, and interviewed each Year II participant and consultant. The results of this evaluation work will be presented in several sections, and discussed more fully in the next portion of the report when Years I and II are contrasted.

Results

KNOWLEDGE: As in Year I, all project participants were administered a post-training inventory that sought their level of knowledge about young children's development and learning as impacted by conditions of risk or handicap. Fifteen of the twenty-five items included on the instrument were targetted for both years as being necessarily related to preschool handicapped children, and were the focus of evaluation concerns.

Knowledge of Handicapping Conditions
Critical Items

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Year II Group Means for Percent Correct N=12	NA	49%
Year I Group Means for Percent Correct N=10	63%	74%

Year II participants scored lower on the final measure than Year I participants. Item-analyses revealed that the greatest discrepancies in scores between both groups were attributed to five items:

(1) the most frequent cause of mild hearing loss in children is chronic otitis medea.

(2) premature and handicapped infants mature more slowly than their normal peers.

(3) the best time to assess hearing ability in young children is when they are playing fifteen feet away.

(4) parents of preschool children having difficulty in a program seldom seek help because they do not realize children's behavior is inappropriate.

(5) Children who live in cities are healthier than children in rural areas.

Interestingly, these items were related to seminar presentations mandatory in Year I but left to the choice of the site-consultant and participants during Year II.

When all twenty-five items were examined, the group means for both years again reflected a discrepancy:

Year I	Total Score Percent Correct	68%
Year II	Total Score Percent Correct	51%

SKILLS BANK. As part of the final exit interviews, each Year II participant was asked to identify those areas in understanding young children and working with them that she now had good information/skills. These responses were contrasted with the responses collected at each site in October by the site-consultants as being "target learning topics."

Topics most frequently mentioned by Year II participants included:

- Social/emotional development of children
- Working with behaviorally troubled children
- Working with parents and children together
- Classroom/center individualizing activities
- Selecting appropriate learning materials/activities
- Creative art/movement activities
- Informally assessing children over time
- Personal organization/resourcefulness

Of these eight topics, six had been high priority need areas identified in the fall. Overall, the Year II participants reflected more growth in center-based activities and knowledge than in knowledge areas about individual children and handicapping conditions (See Self-Evaluation section).

NATURALISTIC OBSERVATIONS. As in Year I, each of the preschool programs participating in the ILP was visited for the purpose of completing a "naturalistic observation" of the children's interaction with each other, with the tasks and space provided for them, and with the adults who cared for them. These observations were carried out by the project evaluator and project staff members at three points during the year: Early Winter, Spring and Early Summer. The structure of the observation dictated sampling and coding child and adult behavior patterns for five minutes at fifteen minute intervals. Each session was two hours in length, and was generally conducted between 9 a.m. and noon each of the three visits.

Results from the three sample observations for all centers are shown below, with trends noted at certain levels

Three-condition Naturalistic Observation*
Six 1982 Preschool Sites

FACTORS	Early Winter	Spring	Early Summer	Trend for Year
I. Children's Time				
- Free Play	28%	39%	24%	Decrease
- Task Area	28	31	34	Increase
- Structured Teaching Time	44	30	43	-
II. Children's Interactions				
-Solitary Play	24%	31%	28%	-
- Two to Five	19	27	25	Increase
- More than Five	21	16	24	Increase
- Total Group	36	26	24	Decrease
III. Adult's Interactions				
- Away from children	18%	21%	11%	Decrease
- Observing children	18	23	25	Increase
- Participating appropriately	22	26	29	Increase
- Participating inappropriately	4	-0-	-0-	Decrease
- Directing Activities	38	30	35	-

* Note: Observers recorded and coded activity within each preschool setting on a pre-determined coding sheet; frequency counts were analyzed and compared to determine this data; Inter-rater reliability=.92. Percents show represent mean % time per cell by observation.

Some preliminary comments about these Year II results prior to comparing them later with Year I would be useful:

(1) Compared with the centers observed in Year I, these centers generally found the teachers and aides spending more time directing children in larger groups. One feasible reason for this difference is the increased presence of more structured programs (Montessori, Title I, etc.) in Year II sample.

(2) Regardless of the center, structured teaching time and groups larger than five were the most frequently observed patterns.

(3) As in Year I, very little inappropriate adult interaction was noted.

(4) In general, children's time in these six programs was equally divided between free-play and task areas when they were not involved in directed teaching activities.

(5) Some changes in behavior patterns could be noted by the end of Year II:

    (a) Free-play activities gave way to increased task-area use by children.

    (b) Dependence on large group/total group activities decreased as smaller group activities (+5 or 2-5) increased during the year.

    (c) Adults decreased the amount of time away from children (18%) early in the year, and increased the amount of time watching/observing while children worked/played (25%).

(6) The ILP participation during Year II appeared to have its greatest influence on adult interaction with the children rather than on the structure of the program. However, in terms of making the various programs more "adaptable" for handicapped or at-risk children, the changes observed could be considered as essential conditions for successful integration.

SELF-EVALUATION. As a basis for the Exit Interviews conducted by the project evaluator in June, 1982, each Year II participant was asked to complete an open-ended Self-Evaluation inventory. Major areas covered by the inventory included:

improved information and skills, personal growth, areas for future learning, benefits from being in ILP, and ways each would have acted differently if starting ILP again.

(a) Good Information: Four general areas were included by the twelve participants in this category: child development concepts, handicapping conditions, program improvements, and curricular modifications.

(b) Good Skills: Three areas commented in by all participants were: curriculum development, program modifications/improvements, and personal development.

(c) Growth due to ILP: Specific mention was made of areas that improved through participation in the year II activities:

- Child awareness. Language development; importance of play; nature of children's self-esteem; complications from handicaps.

- Personal Perspectives. More realistic expectations from parents; better communication with staff and directors; better classroom and self-organization.

- Program Areas. Improved organization and utilization of space; experimental/alternative ways of teaching; more active play and teaching; organizing parent groups; mainstreaming; better use of aides; informal assessment of children and program evaluation.

(d) Ways each would change their participation in ILP:

Comments from all participants contained five generalization about ways they might approach the ILP opportunity again:

1. Seek fuller participation from all staff.
2. Arrange for more group sessions among all participants.
3. Read and discuss more of the material provided by the Project and site consultants.
4. Seek further resources to share with others.
5. Attempt more of the strategies presented during the year.

(e) Overall, ILP Participation was:

Beneficial
Outstanding
Helpful personally and professionally
Rewarding as well as relaxing
Helpful in its approach to and perception of children at-risk, and normal
Exceptional learning experience
An opportunity of lasting value for self and children in the program.

In summary, Year II participants seemed to desire more information about particular kinds of handicaps for themselves, but felt that they had benefited immensely from the project, sensing that they had "stretched" themselves personally and professionally by participating in the activities directed by the project staff.

EXIT INTERVIEWS. Actual participant evaluation of the project's activities and organization was gathered from personal exit interviews conducted by the project evaluator. Areas covered in the interviews included: impressions of the training format, most profitable aspects, use of demonstration sites, more information/skills needed, use of on-site consultant, recommendations. Pertinent comments and reactions gleaned from all interviews are presented below.

(a) Impressions about training format. Most participants mentioned the availability and expertise of the on-site consultants as being important for the success of the program. While they liked visiting other programs and sharing ideas, the responsiveness of the project and consultants to each particular program's needs was seen as the most important feature of Year II.

(b) Most profitable aspects of ILP II:

- Consultant expertise and flexibility
- Organized training sessions
- Meeting more frequently as a staff to improve our knowledge
- Visitations to other centers
- Assistance in restructuring classroom
- Learning how to have program respond to each child's needs
- New ideas beyond mandatory curriculum/ philosophy
- Opened up program staff to new ideas
- Recognized no program's problems are unique but have common elements and solutions.

(c) Use of Project's Demonstration Sites. As in Year I, the use of the two demonstration sites by individual participants was minimal. The reason most often cited for this was the lack of release time or professional growth days to take advantage of the opportunities. One on one, participants did add that the two sites also presented some dissonance to the them personally, in light of the resources and opportunities each had made available. Most participants felt that they would have benefitted from being able to see other program sites as well. Release time is the most problemmatic area to resolve.

(d) Additional information/skills needed. Participants in Year II singled out the need for increased direct contact with various kinds of identified handicapped preschoolers as being a desired opportunity to enhance their learning. Most wanted more specific information about developmentally disabled and emotionally-impaired young children; other areas mentioned included ways to better communicate with and utilize parents.

(e) Use of the On Site Consultant. Unlike Year I, those participants in Year II were served directly by one consistent on-site consultant. The various participants' comments about this arrangement were exclusively positive:

- Consultant was relevant to the center
- Seemed to be a more economical approach with consisted follow-up
- More personal and consistent way to learn new skills
- Consultant demonstration and activities were exceptional
- More in-depth learning occurs because everyone can share in the give-and-take
- More responsive to the needs of a program from week to week.

(f) Recommended Improvements for Year II.

- Focus more time later in year on handicaps
- Spend even more time on-site with training
- "Prime" participants a week in advance for new topics
- Start sessions in September
- Provide more opportunities for all participants to meet and learn in larger group setting
- Arrange for visits to each others programs
- Organize a "follow-up year" with teams of your consultants.

In summary, participants recommended the ILP's approach to inservice training 100% to colleagues. They found the training sessions to be good and responsive to their needs, the program well-organized, the materials exceptional and the long-term effects great. Participants believed that the ILP should serve even more centers in a similar way in future years.

III. TWO MODELS FOR INSERVICE: CONTRAST AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Immersion Learning Project, a federally-funded REGI inservice training project at Wayne State University in Detroit, has been investigating the particular effectiveness of two types of inservice models while providing special education training to teachers and aides in a variety of inner-city day care programs. For the past two years, this project has been directly involved in the inservice training of day-care staff members who have had little previous training with high-risk or handicapped urban preschoolers, but who nevertheless served a large percentage of such children in their programs. The focus of our work with these different providers has been a particular method for developing networks between individual caregivers and centers in urban areas, a method of training we have called "immersion learning."

Adults as Learners

One crucial aspect of the Immersion Learning Project's work with relatively untrained day-care staff members has been recognition of the fact that these adults have methods of learning that necessitate different strategies than those typically used for the pre-service training of teachers, nurses, physicians or social workers.

Educating experienced adults about anything carries with it some developmental and psychological implications that have reached far beyond traditional ideas of learning as being simply a process of information acquisition, storage and use. Whenever adults engage in learning, there is an immense risk that such learning will change them dramatically. While that type of learning is at once exciting and threatening, it does create moments of high anxiety. Educators have also found that if adults are going to learn effectively through inservice education, trainers must teach them in ways that offer some support for any internal struggles that their training might ignite.

Robert McLaughlin (1980) has argued that one reason inservice programs fail to reach adults effectively is not because of inappropriate goals or lack of focusing on real needs; rather, such programs fail because of how they mistreat adults as

learners. Conventional training approaches cannot cope with the anxiety that wells up in adult learners when they confront stimulating information and practices intended to change their behavior. These approaches simply cause adults to feel trapped and resistant or confused and overwhelmed by all that is being presented. What seems to be missing in each of these training strategies is some clear attention to the process of learning rather than the content. Each person in a group appears to be struggling to process the implications of what is learned in isolation. The Immersion Learning Project has discovered that the opportunity to share concerns, misgivings, doubts and anger with others is crucial to building up the kind of support required to at least tolerate ambiguity and anxiety while learning new ideas.

Two Versions of the Model in Action

For the past two years, the Immersion Learning Project has been providing inservice training in special education to urban day-care centers in Detroit. The particular target of these training efforts has been the urban preschool child who may or may not be mildly handicapped at the present moment, but who was clearly at high-risk to be labelled as such upon entrance to elementary school at age five or six. The major impetus for this project was the staggering number of young children below the age of five who were high-risks for eventual developmental or educational handicaps in inner city neighborhoods and who attended local day care programs. Employing criteria of the National Advisory Committee on Child Development (1977), at least 45,390 such high-risk children live in the inner city of Detroit.

The child care programs served by the Immersion Learning Project all enrolled populations of young children that represented a variety of high-risk conditions. Every center was in the inner core of Detroit and served both culturally and linguistically different children from low-income neighborhoods. Upon selection for participation in the project, only one of the centers had an existing parent out-reach or education program.

Since 1980, the Project has sought answers to four general questions posed in the initial funding request:

(1) What style of inservice training assures the greatest impact on behavior in day care and nursery school settings?

(2) What concerns or combination of concerns are most crucial for guaranteeing long term impact in such programs?

(3) What model of learning is most efficient for further developing the knowledge and skills

of day care staff members?

(4) How can information about high-risk/handicapped preschoolers be best connected to other aspects of normal growth and development.

Design

Two versions for delivering the Immersion Learning model have been carried out in two waves during the project's two years. The "immersion model" has been the core of both approaches, combining specific training sessions conducted by project staff members consultants with "exchange" visitations at other participant's programs as well as the four different demonstrations sites. In addition, follow-up tasks and assignments, self-evaluation and self-documentation journals, and group-designed inservice sessions at all the sites were required of each participant.

Where the two approaches varied was in the place and manner of the inservice traing sessions conducted each year. During Year I, the fifteen training sessions were held at a central location near the university and were conducted by a variety of outside consultants. Experts were hired to deal with each of the major areas included in our curriculum (see Figure 2); all had previous experience in inservice training with preschool and/or elementary level teachers, but not directly with day care providers. In most cases, the project staff provided specific focusing and objectives for these individual presentations based on the expressed needs of the participants from seven different programs. Follow-up activities and assignments were established by both the outside consultants and the staff.

In Year II, the process was altered in two ways. First, each center or grouping of centers was assigned one-full-time consultant for the seven months of the project. Each of these consultants was hired on the basis of their skill and experience in working with high-risk and handicapped preschoolers, whether in public school programs or nursery schools/day care settings. Second, the consultants were given some degree of latitude in determining (with the help of the staff members from each center) what aspects of the ILP curriculum would be utilized on site and what other areas of child development and center-management might be incorporated as well.

To recap briefly, the major differences between Year I and Year II were: (1) one full-time ILP consultant actually assigned to each participating day-care center; and (2) flexibility in fashioning inservice activities to mesh with the specific needs of each site rather than the composite needs of all the programs. A further difference during Year II was

the availability of the ILP consultant for varying blocks of time depending upon the staffing patterns of each program and other responsibilities of the consultant. One important point is that both versions of the model's application cost the same; it was simply a matter of redistributing the number and cost of the consultants that varied. Beyond line item differences the budgets for each year were identical.

Comparative Findings: Year I and Year II

When comparing both versions of the Immersion Learning model with previous forms of inservice provided to the participating urban preschools, large gains were apparent. Major differences between the two types of inservice efforts could be seen in the nature of the training provided, the types of topics covered, the duration and extent of the sessions, the amount of contact required with young children, and the long term impact (effects) of the training on the program.

Comparison of Efforts: ILP Projects I and II with Previous Forms of Inservice

	Previous Inservice	Immersion Learning
Topics	General/Specific/How to	Specific/Interconnected How to
Types of Sessions	Half-Day/Regional Conferences	Full-day/Central Site or Program on Site
Length of Training	2 to 6 hrs./day; 3 to 4 days/year. Total: 20 hours +	4 to 8 hrs./day; 30 days/year Total: 240 hrs.+
Contact with Children	Incidental	Required
Lasting Effect	. Some carry-over of general knowledge . Two or three strategies attempted incompletely . Poor recall of specifics after 8 weeks.	. Maximum carry-over of general knowledge . Implementation, follow-up and modification of one or two ideas each week. . Motivation to change program . On-going technical assistance

While the Immersion model had obvious strengths over previously available inservice programs for these preschool settings, the real question was which version of inservice had the greater impact on the staff and programs serviced during both years? The comparative findings will be presented for three different areas: Adult gains in knowledge, skills and professional growth; program accommodation and responsiveness; and evaluations of both models by participants.

Adult Gains

Two objectives of the Immersion Learning Project focused on the increase of knowledge and expertise by urban preschool providers regarding handicapped and at-risk children in their programs, and assistance in the design and implementation of assessment and curriculum processes for such children.

There were clear differences in the way Year I and Year II participants achieved these two objectives. Examining the levels of knowledge participants achieved at the conclusion of each year's training, the Year I group showed greater gains than the group from Year II ($\bar{x}$ score of 68% vs. $\bar{x}$ score of 52% on a twenty-five item Post-test survey). As described in Part II, these differences could be directly traced to the lack of discussion of certain handicap areas by Year II site consultants (hearing loss, motor handicaps, etc.) that were mandatory in Year I. What is more striking, however, was the fact that neither group showed scores higher than that! The knowledge gained appears to be transient for some; since the post-test was administered in June, some areas seem to have been last over time. Another important factor to consider is the educational level of some of the participants in both years: educational preparation varied from master's degrees to high-school equivalency (GED) certificate holders. Some centers scored better than other for both years; the information clearly was delivered effectively, but not all participants were able to retain essential concepts over eight months.

The acquisition of skills, on the other hand, appeared to be stronger for the Year II group. Both the Self-Evaluation Inventories and the Exit Interviews revealed more emphasis and confidence in the area of application for the Year II group rather than the Year I participants.

Compared to Year I trainees, Year II participants showed:

(1) Greater mention of specific strategies and approaches being used in their programs for target children;

(2) Greater mention of "center-related" applications (individualization, integration, behavior-management, etc.) rather than "child-related "concepts (characteristics, conditions of risk, development patterns, etc.);

(3) Greater concern for working more successfully with other staff members and children's parents in cooperative instructional and management efforts;

(4) Less consistent mention of handicaps, assessment problems, developmental questions, and high-risk concerns.

The picture that has emerged is that Year II participants had better retention and demonstration of targeted skills and strategies, while Year I trainees had more extensive knowledge and awareness about handicapped children. These findings are consistent with and support inservice strategy-application found by Kaplan (1981) and Riegel (1979). Inservice that is center-based and delivered by a particular consultant results in the acquisition of skills more consistently than large-group, off-grounds programs.

There were some important similarities between both group of adults, however, when other factors were examined, especially in the area of professional development. Both groups agreed that the ILP model promoted personal growth in both programmatic and personal areas related to:

(1) accepting and accommodating individual differences in children;

(2) focusing on behavior management by examining the degree of match between curriculum demands and each child's needs;

(3) the need to increase one's own expertise to more successfully and happily work with children at-risk or handicapped; and

(4) becoming involved in formal structures for acquiring new teaching skills (graduate school, bachelors degree, associate degree programs).

Program Accommodation and Responsiveness

Another objective of the Immersion Learning Project was to attempt to evaluate the relative impact two different versions of inservice might have on particular kinds of preschool programs for urban youngsters. Ascertaining the actual impact the ILP inservice had on each of the Year I and Year II programs was not without problems but reasonably accurate results were gathered. Using a modified version of David Day's (1979) Naturalistic Observation instruments, ILP was able to draw up profiles on each of the participating programs and document particular pre-and post-training characteristics.

As described in Parts I and II, the observations collected data about child and adult behavior/interaction patterns in three modes: free-play, task areas, and structured-teaching times. The table below shows the ways in which Year I and Year II programs compared on the mean between first and last observations. (A more detailed analysis of individual centers matched for organization, philosophy, and size is being completed for an SRCD paper due in early 1983).

In order to interpret the data, it would be useful to first contrast (on the mean) Year I and Year II centers before any training through ILP occured. The data collected showed certain characteristics that could explain the eventual impact results:

Pre-Training Profiles

Year I Programs	Year II Programs
. Greatest proportion of time is Free Play (54%)	. Greatest proportion of time is Structured-teaching (44%)
. Preferred Group Size is 2-5 (47%)	. Preferred Group Size is Total Group (36%)
. Typical Adult Role: Directing or Participating appropriately	. Typical Adult Role: Directing or Participating appropriately
. Adult Absent rate: 15%	. Adult Absent rate: 18%

Program Responsiveness: Year I vs. Year II Programs, Pre-and Post-Training*

FACTORS	PRE: Year I/ Year II	POST: Year I/Year II
I. CHILDREN'S TIME ALLOCATION:		
- Free Play	54% / 28%	56%/ 24%
- Task Areas	27 / 27	30 / 34
- Structured Teaching	19 / 44	14 / 43
II. CHILDREN'S INTER-ACTION PATTERNS:		
- Solitary Play	37%/ 24%	36%/ 28%
- Group of 2 to 5	47 / 19	36 / 28
- Group more than 5	12 / 21	21 / 24
- Total Group	4 / 36	7 / 24
III. ADULT INTERACTION PATTERNS:		
- Absent	15%/ 18%	18%/11%
- Observing	18 / 18	27 / 25
- Participating Appropriately	25 / 22	33 / 29
- Participating Inappropriately	3 / 4	0 / 0
- Adult Directing	39 / 38	22 / 35

*Percentages denotes Mean % of time per cell for each total observation periods.

In general, the Year II programs were more structured, "pre-school" oriented programs (two were Montessori programs, two were Title I preschools) while the Year I centers were more directed towards a day care and child-enrichment focus. But as the earlier table shows, the effects of the two different styles of inservice provided by ILP appeared to be similar across both the participating groups. By the end of the training sessions both years, the preschool settings showed definite shifts at the program level in response to staff training. Most notable were the movements in two areas: children's interaction patterns and adult interaction patterns. Time allocation both years changed little.

Program Shifts Recorded By
Naturalistic Observation Data: Year I vs. Year II

	YEAR I	YEAR II
Children's Interactions	. Substantially the same through the year with a trend toward larger group (more than 5) rather than smaller group (single or 2 to 5).	. Significant change downward from total group towards groups of five or more, and groups of 2 to 5.
Adult Interactions	. Significat shift from Adult Directing (39% to 22%) to Adult Participating and adult observing.	. Significant shift from both ends of mode, Adult Absent and Adult Directing to Adult Participating or Observing.
Children's Time Allocation	. Substantially the same through the year with time equally divided between Free Play (56%) and Task Area/Structured Teaching (30% and 14%).	. Substantially the same through the year, with the emphasis in Structured Teaching Time (43%), and a minor shift from free-play to task areas as second mode of choice.

One general conclusion from this observation data is that inservice training did not affect the actual structure of the program as much as it did types and patterns of interactions between children and adults in the program. This finding is consistent with the participants' self-evaluation data which

indicated they found more change in their own behavior with children than they did with the actual program structure. One important fact to consider in conjuction with this finding is that only five program directors participated to any significant degree in the training process both years; while training affected staff behaviors it simply did not touch the bulk of the directors, even though each was invited to participate if they so chose.

In summary, the direction and degree to which the programs seemed to shift in response to the training provided by ILP was directly related to their over-all structure. More structured programs appeared to "loosen up" as the training progressed, while more disorganized and free-floating programs became more structured and integrated. This "regression" to some form of programmatic mean would be an interesting phenomenon to study more closely in future training projects. Both shifts clearly resulted in programs more conducive to working with exceptional children, particularly from the viewpoint of creating a more purposeful staff. More importantly, both types of shifts were seen both years regardless of the Immersion Learning "model" of delivery used.

Participant Preferences and Recommendations

Which method for delivering inservice training through the Immersion Learning Model did participants prefer? The more conventional, session-by-session process with "exchange" opportunities, or the one-center/one-consultant model tested in Year II?

Responses gathered from participants both years clearly indicated a general preference for some form of "center-based" inservice, no matter how well other forms of training might operate. Reasons cited by both groups for this choice included:

(1) The immediate contact and relevance of the expert trainer's work with the unique characteristics and problems of the particular center and its program;

(2) The consistent relationship that developed between the site consultant, the staff, children and (in several cases) parents;

(3) The duration of contact and opportunity for follow-up to the implementation of certain assessment or curricular strategies;

(4) The availability of the consultant(s) to work with other resource persons to dramatically alter a program's methods of grouping, teaching or planning and evaluate the long-term results;

(5) The opportunity to have an outsider evaluate and recommend changes in behavior or structure without fear of reprisal or evaluation of worth.

But participants both years also noted some advantages to the more "traditional" mode tested in Year I:

(1) More diversified and structured input from weekly consultant sessions. Speakers in Year I were perceived as being generally helpful and knowledgeable of participants' problems and needs;

(2) Opportunity to get together with teachers and directors from other programs over the course of eight months to learn from each other, compare ideas, and knwo other programs more intimately;

(3) The larger blocks of "release time" provided for Year I participants guaranteed an opportunity to discuss problems and needs, reflect on solutions, and plan cooperative approaches; during Year II, site consultants had to scramble around to see everyone at a convenient time, and seldom was <u>everyone</u> at a center seen at the same time.

Recommendations based on these responses will be found at the conclusion of this report.

Major Issues Confronting Urban Preschool Programs

Throughout the two years the ILP has worked with urban preschool programs, certain key issues have surfaced repeatedly. Day care providers and nursery schools face similar problems in changing their programs to better accommodate children at-risk for handicaps or already mildy impaired. Anyone attempting to provide effective inservice training to these programs will need to understand and consider the following major issues that have been broadly grouped together here:

(1) Difficulties in Staffing Programs:

(a) High turnover-rate for teaching and support-staff.

(b) Pervading sense of isolation and loneliness as staff members attempt to improve their interactions and activities with children.

(c) Insecurity about how much contact staff members should have with parents.

(d) Lack of flexibility and malleability about what strategies or activities could be attempted with young children; a general fear of trying new approaches that are not part of their own early experience.

(2) Difficulties with the Children Served:

(a) High turnover rate of children, many attending on a very sporadic basis each week;

(b) Increased numbers of children being referred to urban preschool programs from cases of abuse and/or neglect, with the compounding problems created by these children and their parents on programs;

(c) Substantial numbers of children who evidence language delay and cognitive processing problems due to less than favorable early experiences.

(3) Difficulties in Administering Programs:

(a) Significant lack of clarity about what a program expects of itself: philosophy, goals, organization, curricular emphases, and child-expectations;

(b) Over all lack of preparation on the part of adults working with the children, particularly at eh care and instruction level

a number of programs are now employing laid-off teachers who have had no previous experience or training in early childhood areas;

(c) General lack of understanding about what staff members need in the way of training, how such training should occur, and the amount of time required to actually alter the behavior of adults around children.

(d) Significant lack of time in these programs for adults to be by themselves, providing release time for teachers and aides to be learners themselves, to discuss new ideas, visit programs and take more responsibility for their own development.

(4) Other Assorted Problems about Inservice Training

(a) Suspicion about new ideas or strategies that require changes in attitude or more "energy" to plan and implement.

(b) Resistance to training that demands its own requirements; a feeling that each person is "already doing enough," so why do some additional work like observing children, making stories, taking notes, etc.

(c) Tension created by involving both the Director and program staff in an inservice experience; directors attempt to show the staff they already know this information, and the staff will not volunteer ideas or ask questions when the director is present.

(d) Lack of importance given in many programs to what actually happens with children each day; routines are preserved but little thought or planning goes into what activities should occur or why.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Immersion Learning Project at Wayne State University investigated the advantages of two alternative approaches to providing long-term inservice training in special education to urban preschool programs that worked with high-risk and/or handicapped young children. Using an "extended learning model" as the basic vehicle for training, the ILP worked with fifteen day care and nursery school settings from 1980 to 1982, focusing training during those years into approximately eight-month blocks. A variety of instruments, measures, and observations were utilized to ascertain the effectivenss of the approaches.

Both methods of providing inservice to these programs were as different from the inservice training previously experienced by them as was the content. Few participants were aware of the critical needs the children at-risk for handicaps in their programs were presenting, much less knowledgeable in strategies or materials for integrating them more successfully into their programs.

After two years, results of the Immersion Learning Project point to the following conclusions specific to the project, and to some recommendations that reach beyond ILP and into the whole realm of inservice training.

Conclusions

(1) ILP provided an important opportunity to have a break from children, discuss a program's problems and needs, and reflect on cooperative solutions.

(2) Long-term inservice (like ILP) is less likely to have a major impact on a program's structure when a program is already highly-structured, and more likely to change behavior when a program is less-structured or more disorganized.

(3) After one year, the greater majority of the programs served by ILP were only beginning to be ready to deal with mildly handicapped children. It appears to have taken the first wave of exposure to training simply to make a number of programs more suitable for young children in general.

(4) ILP provided greatest gains in the area of adult and child interactions within programs, and the improvement of instructional strategies. In addition, participants became more receptive to new and challenging ideas, and demonstrated implementation based on their own motivation.

(5) There is good data to support the position that certain programs would benefit from one method of inservice, while other types of programs might require different approaches. Clearly, effective inservice of any duration is best accomplished by matching inservice style with a particular site's organization and mission as well as maturity.

(6) Trainees benefit most from a few important topic areas that were well-developed. Year II participants particularly noted the advantage of having on-going presentations by their own consultant that fully-covered an area crucial to them in a throrough, complete way.

(7) Unlike the conclusions drawn by the national study of REGI projects (Applied Management Science, R. L. Bale, Investigator, 1982), ILP trainees in both years put little priority on identifying children with handicaps based on characteristics and much greater priority on knowing more about curriculum and strategies for integrating these children successfully with non-handicapped peers.

(8) Inservice training is most relevant and lasting when delivered by a consistent consulting team (or one consultant) a longer period of time (eight months to fifteen months).

Recommendations

(1) Serve urban preschools for at least two years (fifteen to eighteen months);

(2) Based inservice at sites with primary (one or more) consultants while providing a support network and alternative meetings arrangement for larger groups;

(3) Emphasize effective strategies for grouping children, developing individually appropriate goals for their learning, and selection of curriculum materials;

(4) De-emphasize training content that focuses on characteristics, identification of children, and behavioral problems associated with them;

(5) Employ a variety of teaching/learning opportunities for participants, emphasizing direct experience with careful time set aside for indepth observation, informal evaluation, and simulation activities at several sites under trainer observation;

(6) Stratify modes of inservice content to match the experience and education of the trainees, allowing individual learning in some areas, and promoting group-interaction in others;

(7) Provide adequate resource monies to trainees to selectively purchase materials, etc. that could most benefit their work with children at their sites;

(8) Negotiate reasonable hours of "release-time" learning for trainees during working hours and away from young children, recognizing their own needs as learners to be free from distraction and in a space conducive to challenge and growth.

The Immersion Learning Project has found that teaching adults to work better with these children requires particular methods and experiences that accept the adult learner as being unique. Teaching adults effectively through inservice programs means providing "anxiety provoking" ideas on the one hand, and resources for coping with the anxiety created by such learning on the other hand. Effective inservice programs must not only provide information that is potentially "disruptive" and intended to improve particular teaching behaviors, but they must also facilitate the creation of a reasonably secure environment where adults can be assisted emotionally to process and evaluate what they hear. No program can afford to have its important ideas rejected outright. Adults need support and interaction to translate ideas into new behavior.

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